

VZCZCXRO4557
OO RUEHHM
DE RUEHHI #0852/01 1070424
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 170424Z APR 06
FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1480
INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY 0946
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 0156

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 000852

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E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: COUNTERNARCOTICS PROJECT PROPOSAL FROM UNODC

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Embassy Hanoi has received a three-year, USD 1.1 million project proposal from UNODC to improve the GVN's capacity to gather, use and share counternarcotics information and intelligence in order to build its capacity to interdict illegal drugs. Additional benefits for GVN border security and anti-trafficking efforts are also possible. We support this project. End Summary.

The Problem

¶2. (SBU) The biggest problem with regard to drug supply reduction is the inadequate and ineffective nature of border security enforcement; this is also a problem that increases Vietnam's vulnerability to terrorism and trafficking in persons, among other transnational threats. According to UNODC statistics, over 98 per cent of drug trafficking is discovered inside the country, while only two per cent of seizures are made in border areas. Consequently, the GVN wants to strengthen cooperation among relevant authorities operating in border areas, including counter-narcotics police, customs authorities and the border army.

¶3. (SBU) Current GVN information collection and sharing procedures are inadequate and need to be restructured. Vietnam's effectiveness in drug law enforcement is hampered by disorganized and ineffective current processes. Without a system to ensure the rapid flow of information between provinces, agencies and international partners, the effectiveness of any initiative, including other USG-funded assistance, is severely hampered.

¶4. (SBU) Information sharing and collection is a sensitive topic, and we have limited concrete knowledge of the current information systems, procedures and practices of Vietnamese law enforcement agencies. We have, however, often observed a lack of clear and defined tactical and strategic planning and processes and extremely limited information sharing within and among law enforcement and border security agencies.

¶5. (SBU) Lack of equipment for sharing information among offices and with other agencies is also impeding the GVN's capacity to interdict and dismantle trafficking networks.

UNODC's Solution

UNODC proposes to provide training and equipment, including hardware and populated database software, to achieve:

- Improved cooperation between the project sites through information sharing and joint operations;
- Enhanced capacity to manage investigations and analyze drug law enforcement information;

-- A comprehensive ongoing computer-based drug law enforcement training program in place that will significantly raise the level, knowledge and expertise within the drug law enforcement community;

-- Fully trained and functioning Target Development Teams who are able to effectively collate and analyze information relating to drug law enforcement in a timely manner and develop information into an operational investigation that can be passed onto the operational teams in the provinces for resolution;

-- A fully functioning information and document management system which enables the Police, Customs and the Border Army to collect, collate, analyze and disseminate information, allowing them to sustain an increasing tempo of information collection.

Why We Should Support This Project

16. (SBU) USG strategy for combating drugs in Vietnam has two main pillars: building the basic capacity of Vietnamese law enforcement, and encouraging greater Vietnamese cooperation with the United States and other international partners on counternarcotics and transnational crime. This project addresses the first part of our strategy directly, and the second part indirectly. At the moment, the GVN does not share even the limited sensitive law enforcement data it has with the United States. However, the involvement of the UN and the UN's international experts in building capacity in intelligence and information sharing will, we believe, accustom the GVN to greater international participation and involvement in law enforcement, particularly in intel and

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information sharing.

17. (SBU) UNODC is particularly well-suited to implement this project. UNODC's international staff is experienced and very well-connected in the Vietnamese law enforcement community, and the Vietnamese staff includes active duty Ministry of Public Security Officers who have ongoing and excellent access to decisionmakers in MPS. The current USG-funded G-55 counterdrug project (this is the project that creates anti-drug interagency task forces in six key "hotspot" provinces) is the natural starting place for this project, and existing investment in G-55 can be leveraged to give this project a substantial running start.

18. (SBU) In addition to the direct benefit to our counterdrug efforts in Vietnam, we see additional Counterterrorism and anti-TIP advantages to this project. Enhancing information and intelligence collection and sharing within and among GVN law enforcement agencies will create substantial improvements in Vietnam's border security efforts, which at the moment are weak at best.

19. (U) We will pass the UNODC proposal to INL/AE and EAP/MLS by email.

BOARDMAN